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Berkeley students and supporters stage an antiapartheid rally outside Sproul Hall

The Times They Are Achangin'

Student protest stirs once again on campuses across the U.S.

At the University of California, Berkeley, sidewalk vendors selling cappuccino and sukiyaki did a brisk business as some 3,000 well-behaved protesters assembled in front of Sproul Hall to demand that the university divest itself of holdings in companies with investments in South Africa. At Columbia University in New York City, hundreds of students held a similar antiapartheid demonstration by blockading a campus building. At the University of Colorado in Boulder, 450 demonstrators were arrested while attempting to disrupt CIA recruitment interviews. To oppose military research at the University of Minnesota, ten students staged a "kill-in" by opening a canister of fake nerve gas and then collapsing in a heap on the floor of the president's office.

Something is blowing in the wind this spring on campuses across the U.S. After a long season when colleges seemed becalmed, ripples of dissent and discontent are beginning to appear. While the demonstrations are hardly comparable in size, intensity or effect with the tumultuous wave of campus protests that changed the political landscape of the country in the late 1960s, they nevertheless indicate that the frequent laments about apathy and self-absorption in the 1980s student are not wholly justified.

Curiously, today's protesters sometimes seem more reminiscent of the '50s than the '60s; they tend to have short hair and occasionally wear ties; they are less radical and more disciplined than their predecessors. While few in number, they may be this generation's pioneers of social conscience. Notes Joseph Bristol, a 19-

year-old Yale sophomore, one of six students arrested for bursting into a CIA interview: "It seems to be the birth of a movement. The obliviousness of college students is starting to end."

The issues stirring the most activism on campus are South Africa, Central America, the CIA, the threat of nuclear war and proposed federal budget cuts in education. Of these, South Africa has engendered the widest protest, a movement inspired by the continuing arrests of demonstrators outside the South African embassy in Washington. Among the campuses, Berkeley and Columbia, two seedbeds of '60s radicalism, are once again



The protest continues at Columbia

leading the march. At Columbia, which has \$33 million invested in concerns doing business in South Africa, the blockade of Hamilton Hall has continued more than two weeks. At Berkeley, mass rallies were triggered early last week when police arrested 159 protesters who had been on a weeklong sleep-in vigil decrying the university's \$1.7 billion portfolio with companies tainted by apartheid.

Not all the turmoil is political in character or international in scope. At Stanford University last week, some 250 students and faculty demonstrated against the presence of a *Playboy* magazine representative shopping for willing student bodies for a picture spread called "Girls of the PAC-10." At the University of Texas at Austin, 2,000 students marched to the state capitol building to protest a proposed tuition hike. The Reagan Administration's proposed 20% cut in student loans and grants, which has stimulated protests, also seems to have catalyzed more general student dissent and discontent.

Some faculty members think that the burgeoning student movement is due to prosperity, not politics. One reason protests have revived, suggests Stanford Sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset, is because the economy is healthy. Agrees Berkeley Sociologist Neil J. Smelser: "Students are willing to get into a bit of trouble now because they are confident and don't feel the risk they did two or three years ago."

Today's protesters take a stance on the Establishment that is not so much anti as accommodating. At the University of Colorado, students consulted with school officials and campus police before demonstrating against the CIA. Notes Jill Hanauer, Colorado's student body president: "Unlike in the '60s, students today are more concerned about their futures. There is more willingness to work within the system."

These new pragmatic idealists approach political protest with the same methodical preparation they might give to a job interview. At the University of Wisconsin, students have organized petitions and face-to-face negotiations with the administration. Says John Schenian, president of the Wisconsin Student Association: "If demonstrations are your only tactic, then you're not going to be very successful. You just don't appear to be very rational."

As much as today's students are demonstrating against social injustice, they may also be protesting the fact that they are so often labeled credential-craving moneygrubbers. Yale Protest Organizer Tom Keenan, for one, argues that student idealism has not gone the way of the slide rule. Says he: "A sizable population of students is extremely discontented with the yuppie future and will take time in college to change things. These protests go some distance in disproving the idea that we're one homogeneous student body heading for business suits."

—By Richard Stengel.
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